

For immediate release
October 5, 2006

RIO GRANDE FLOOD CONTROL LEVEE CERTIFICATION AND LOWER RIO GRANDE WATER QUALITY ON AGENDA FOR OCTOBER 16 PUBLIC MEETING

The United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) has scheduled a public meeting of its Lower Rio Grande Citizens' Forum (LRGCF) on October 16, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. at the USIBWC office, 325 Golf Course Road in Mercedes, Texas. The purpose of the LRGCF is to facilitate the exchange of information between the USIBWC and members of the public about Commission activities in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

Carlos Marin, Acting Commissioner of the USIBWC, will discuss the USIBWC's response to the levee certification process that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is currently undertaking in Hidalgo and Cameron Counties. FEMA has requested that the USIBWC certify that its Rio Grande flood control levees can handle the 100-year flood. USIBWC studies have shown that some levee segments would be overtopped or experience freeboard encroachment during the 100-year flood. The USIBWC is implementing a multi-year plan to raise and rehabilitate Rio Grande flood control levees. Work is currently focused on levee improvements in the areas of Hidalgo and Mission, Texas.

Marin will also give an update on the effort to rehabilitate the Morillo Drain, a binational water quality project located in Mexico that conveys saline irrigation return flows to the Gulf of Mexico, thereby reducing saline discharges to the Rio Grande. The Commission is implementing a project to encase a segment of the drain in order to reduce maintenance problems and improve reliability.

In other business, Marin will discuss the status of Mexico's water deliveries to the United States under the 1944 Water Treaty. Mexico's longstanding Rio Grande water debt was resolved one year ago and the Commission is seeking actions to prevent a recurrence.

Nancy Hanks, USIBWC Environmental Protection Specialist and Texas Clean Rivers Program (CRP) Quality Assurance Officer will give a presentation entitled "Water Quality in the Lower Rio

Grande.” The CRP, in conjunction with USIBWC, sponsors routine monitoring and special studies along the Rio Grande by partnering with other local entities. Dr. Hanks will provide an overview of the Texas Clean Rivers Program as well as updated information on water quality at the various sites in the Lower Rio Grande in Texas.

A complete meeting agenda appears below. Members of the public who would like more information can contact the USIBWC’s Lower Rio Grande Project Office at 956-565-3150 or the Public Affairs Office at sallyspener@ibwc.state.gov.

For more information:

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LOWER RIO GRANDE CITIZENS' FORUM

Monday, October 16, 2006

4:00 - 6:00 P.M.

USIBWC Conference Room

325 Golf Course Road*

Mercedes, TX 78570

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions - Wayne Wells, Citizens' Forum Co-Chair
- Water Quality in the Lower Rio Grande- Nancy Hanks, Environmental Protection Specialist and Clean Rivers Program (CRP) Quality Assurance Officer, USIBWC
- Project Updates - Carlos Marin, Acting Commissioner, USIBWC
 - Morillo Drain Project
 - Mexican Water Deliveries under the 1944 Water Treaty
 - Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Project Levee Rehabilitation
- Public Comment
- Board Discussion, Suggested Future Agenda Items

If you have a disability that you wish to self-identify confidentially that requires accommodation, please advise us ahead of time. For more information, call 956-565-3150.

***Directions:** From Expressway 83, exit Mile 2 W. Travel south for approximately **1.5 miles** to Golf Course Road. Turn left. The USIBWC office is the first building on your left.